

Arlington Human Rights Commission Minutes-Final February 18, 2015

Present: Sheri Baron, Christine Carney (Chair), Ghanda DiFiglia, Marlissa Briggett, Mel Goldsipe, Gary Horowitz, Jorge Loayza, Bill Logan, Nick Minton

Absent: Douglas Davidoff, Stacy Davison, Sharon Grossman, Robin Varghese

The January minutes were accepted, as amended, by all except that Commissioner DiFiglia abstained

Commissioner Carney reported that we were contacted by the Finance Committee, indicating that we are likely to be level funded. If we did not want to be level funded, we should appear before the Finance Committee. Spenser Buell from the Advocate contacted us asking for a comment regarding the warrant articles and the joint subcommittee with the school committee.

Commissioner Carney reminded commissioners that during the time when we are without paid staff, commissioners have agreed to take turns with the monthly minutes and checking the telephone messages. If you are assigned a month for minute taking, you should also check the messages regularly. She will send out an email with instructions on how to do that remotely. Commissioner Briggett will check the messages through February.

We received an incident report from the police department with potential hate incident components. Commissioner Baron will follow up with the reporting persons to let them know of the Commission's existence; to find out more about the nature of the incident; and to determine whether we can be of assistance.

Subcommittee reports.

School Liaison Subcommittee:

- Commissioner Davison continues to meet every month with the middle school.
- We need a replacement for the Brackett School.
- Commissioner Minton reported that the next monthly meeting with the superintendent is on March 9. The last meeting focused on the issue of racial disparity in APS discipline and the Black Lives Matter event.
- Commissioner Briggett reported that she went to a racial justice workshop facilitated by Debby Irving, author of "Waking Up White." According to Ms. Irving, Superintendent Bodie has bought her book for the Arlington teachers to review. After discussion, the Commission decided to reach out to Superintendent Bodie to express our appreciation that she is looking at racial justice issues and to offer the Commission's assistance in providing sponsorship

for Ms. Irving to lead a workshop for the teachers. Commissioner Briggett will write to Superintendent Bodie.

Joint Subcommittee with Arlington School Committee will meet again on March 5 with Superintendent Bodie, followed by a meeting with Mr. Harrington.

The LGBTQ survey subcommittee will meet before the next meeting. The Commission unanimously adopted the Needs Assessment Plan which should be attached to the minutes. There was discussion surrounding publicizing the survey once we have a draft survey. Commissioner Goldsipe has been contacted by Mass Equality about changing the HRC mission to include trans and non-conforming individuals in the protected status categories. She will be in touch with Mr. Heim about how to do that before warrant articles are due next December and she asked that we put topics relating to this issue on next month's agenda.

Commissioner Logan is looking into showing the movie Selma at the Capitol Theater for a free public event.

Warrant articles. There are two warrant articles dealing with the AHRC. One asks for appropriations for an executive director. The second asks that the AHRC have power to hear cases against town officials/departments. There was extended discussion regarding the Commission's position on these two matters. It was decided that Ms. Baron would research how other communities address complaints against town officials. The Commission will put this matter on the agenda for next month in order to provide a timely position statement before town meeting begins.

Commissioner Carney asked commissioners to help publicize the February 28 event with the Diversity Task Group, Unequal Justice: Consequences of Race and Class in Our Criminal Justice System, a panel discussion and community conversation.

She asked that commissioners attend and help with the logistics. Commissioners Briggett and Baron moved to set aside \$100 for refreshments for the event which passed unanimously.

Mr. Varghese has resigned. The Town Manager is the appointing authority.

Upon motion by Commissioner Baron which was seconded by Commissioner Goldsipe, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:
Marlissa Briggett
Commissioner